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Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the forty-ninth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015), paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016) and paragraph 6 of resolution 2393 (2017), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system[1] and from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other relevant sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for February 2018.

II. Major developments

Box 1
Key points: February 2018

1. On 24 February, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401 (2018), by which it demanded, among other things, that all parties cease hostilities without delay and engage immediately to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation of that demand by all parties, for a durable humanitarian pause for at

[1] Input provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, the Mine Action Service, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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least 30 consecutive days throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, to enable the safe, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and services and medical evacuations of the critically sick and wounded, in accordance with applicable international law. While in some areas the conflict diminished in intensity, there has been no cessation of hostilities.

2. In eastern Ghutah, in particular, air strikes, shelling and ground offensives intensified after the adoption of the resolution and have claimed many hundreds of civilian lives. The United Nations recorded 29 attacks on health facilities. Notwithstanding the announcement by the Russian Federation of daily five-hour humanitarian pauses to allow civilians to leave through the Wafidin crossing, few did so. Shelling from eastern Ghutah into Damascus resulted in death and injuries.

3. Fighting between government forces and non-State armed opposition groups in the southern and eastern countryside of Idlib Governorate slowed in the second half of February, although civilian deaths and injuries continued to be reported. From 15 December 2017 to 10 February 2018, 385,000 internal displacements were recorded, with those displaced moving to the central and northern parts of the governorate. Fighting between the Levant Liberation Organization (Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham), which is led by Jabhat Fath al-Sham (the former Nusrah Front), and an alliance of non-State armed opposition groups known as the Syrian Liberation Front broke out on 20 February, disrupting the lives of civilians, the work of humanitarian organizations and United Nations cross-border shipments for a few days.

4. Some 20,000 civilians reportedly returned to the city of Raqqah in February, even though it is not yet considered safe to do so. The widespread presence of explosive hazards, including unexploded ordnance, landmines and improvised explosive devices, throughout the city has continued to pose a significant risk to civilians and humanitarian workers. According to partners on the ground, some 130 civilians have been killed and 658 injured in blasts since the city was retaken from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in October 2017.

5. United Nations humanitarian assistance reached millions of people in need, including some 2 million who received food assistance through regular deliveries. Access to hard-to-reach and besieged areas remained challenging, with only one inter-agency convoy reaching a besieged location, that of Nashabiyah, in besieged eastern Ghutah, on 14 February, where it provided assistance to 7,200 people.

6. The United Nations estimates that some 2.3 million people (in December, the estimate was 2.9 million people) are now living in hard-to-reach and besieged locations in the Syrian Arab Republic, including 413,920 in eight besieged locations (in December, the figure was 417,566 people), following the removal of Bayt Jinn, in Rif Dimashq, from the list of besieged locations.

3. On 24 February, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2401 (2018), by which it demanded that all parties cease hostilities without delay; a durable pause for at least 30 consecutive days throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, to enable the safe, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and services and medical evacuations of the critically sick and wounded in accordance with applicable international law; and the immediate deployment of humanitarian convoys each week, following the start of the cessation of hostilities. It also called upon all parties to lift the sieges of populated areas, including in eastern Ghutah, Yarmuk, Fu'ah and

Kafraya. The Council affirmed that the cessation of hostilities would not apply to military operations against terrorist groups and those associated with them, as designated by the Council.

4. In support of the implementation of the resolution, my Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, oversaw a period of intense diplomacy with the Geneva-based International Syria Support Group Humanitarian Task Force, led by his Senior Adviser, Jan Egeland, and co-chaired by the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

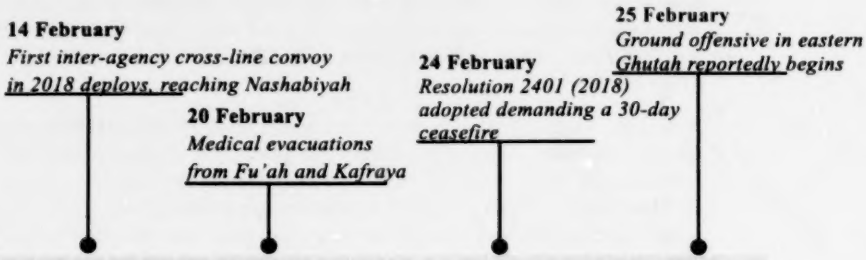
5. The adoption of the resolution and the diplomatic efforts to implement it notwithstanding, violence continued, in particular in eastern Ghutah and beyond, including in Afrin, parts of Idlib and into Damascus and its suburbs, resulting in civilian deaths, injuries and displacement and damage to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. Military activities also affected the ability of United Nations agencies and their partners to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance.

6. In besieged eastern Ghutah, air strikes and daily shelling throughout the enclave, hitting Duma, Harasta, Ayn Tarma, Irbin, Zamalka, Saqba, Hammurah, Misraba, Mudayra, Jawbar, Jisrayn and Nashabiyah, resulted in civilian deaths and injuries and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. There were also new allegations of chlorine attacks. The annex to the present report provides a list of casualties reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The United Nations recorded 29 attacks on health facilities, 14 on hospitals, 11 on health centres, 2 on ambulance stations, 1 on a psychiatric hospital and 1 on a medical warehouse. A ground offensive that intensified on 25 February resulted in the displacement of thousands towards Duma and Kafr Batna. Markets are reportedly closed, with very few shops opening and then only intermittently. Prices for basic goods remain far beyond the purchasing power of most residents, with bread costing 15 to 20 times more than in Damascus.

7. On 27 February, the three major armed opposition groups in eastern Ghutah — the Army of Islam (Jaysh al-Islam), the Rahman Corps (Faylaq al-Rahman) and Ahrar al-Sham — confirmed in writing their commitment to the implementation of resolution 2401 (2018), including ensuring humanitarian access and to expelling from eastern Ghutah all elements of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (the Levant Liberation Organization), the Nusrah Front and Al-Qaida and anyone who belonged to those groups (see S/2018/169). On 26 February, the Russian Federation announced a daily five-hour humanitarian pause, starting from 27 February, to allow civilians to leave eastern Ghutah through the Wafidin crossing. Two people were reported to have left, but some were reportedly not permitted to do so by non-State armed opposition groups inside the enclave.

8. Attacks on residential neighbourhoods of Damascus also continued from eastern Ghutah, resulting in deaths, injuries and damage to civilian infrastructure.

Figure I
Key dates in February 2018


14 February
First inter-agency cross-line convoy in 2018 deploys, reaching Nashabiyah
20 February
Medical evacuations from Fu'ah and Kafraya
24 February
Resolution 2401 (2018) adopted demanding a 30-day ceasefire
25 February
Ground offensive in eastern Ghutah reportedly begins

9. Fighting between government forces and non-State armed opposition groups in the southern and eastern countryside of Idlib Governorate slowed in the second half of February, although civilian deaths and injuries continued to be reported. From 15 December 2017 to 10 February 2018, 385,000 displacements were recorded, with those displaced moving to the central and northern parts of the governorate. Many of those who fled had already been displaced and are forced to live in makeshift camps or in the open. Formal camps are operating at up to 400 per cent of their capacity. The situation was further compounded by attacks by two non-State armed opposition groups, Ahrar al-Sham and Nur al-Din al-Zanki, forming the Syrian Liberation Front, against Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham across Idlib and western Aleppo Governorates, impeding civilian movement, delaying United Nations cross-border shipments for some days and creating a more challenging operational environment for humanitarian partners.

10. From 19 February, sniper activity and artillery shelling was reported in residential areas in the besieged towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya, Idlib Governorate. On 20 February, local sources reported that five medical cases and their family members (16 people in total) had been evacuated from the towns by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to hospitals in government-controlled areas.

11. Turkish forces, along with Syrian non-State armed opposition groups affiliated with Operation Euphrates Shield, continued Operation Olive Branch in Afrin, Aleppo Governorate. On 20 January, the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations in New York had indicated that Turkey had "initiated a military operation on 20 January 2018 ... aimed at ensuring [the country's] border security [and] neutralizing terrorists in Afrin" (see S/2018/53). There have been reports of civilian deaths, injuries and displacement. The local authorities are also reportedly restricting movement, with most civilians not permitted to leave the district at checkpoints. Some 5,000 people have, however, been registered as displaced from Afrin district to elsewhere in Aleppo Governorate since 20 January.

12. Some 20,600 civilians reportedly returned to Raqqah in February, for an estimated total of 86,600 since October 2017. The widespread presence of explosive hazards, including unexploded ordnance, landmines and improvised explosive devices, throughout the city has continued to pose a significant risk to civilians and humanitarian workers. The systematic survey, marking and subsequent removal of those hazards are a prerequisite for the safe return of civilians and the safe delivery

of humanitarian aid. Health actors are recording an average of between 25 and 30 blast-related civilian injuries and deaths per week. The number of child victims, especially boys, is increasing as more families return. Some 130 civilians have been killed and 658 injured in blasts since the city was retaken from ISIL in October 2017. Medical and other services remain limited there, with only one maternity hospital and a health clinic operating. The lack of clean water is another serious concern. Humanitarian agencies continue to emphasize that, owing to the high prevalence of landmines, booby traps and explosive remnants of war, it is not safe for civilians to return to the city. Owing to the conditions, humanitarian organizations have only a limited presence on the ground.

13. Government forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces have continued to clash with ISIL in southern rural Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, along the eastern bank of the Euphrates and the border with Iraq, reportedly resulting in civilian casualties and small-scale displacement. Explosive hazard contamination is also a threat there, reportedly resulting in the death of 26 people during the reporting period. An estimated 325,000 people remain in need of assistance in the governorate. Priority needs include health support and water and sanitation. In the city of Dayr al-Zawr, many streets remain inaccessible owing to accumulated rubble and the risk of explosive hazards. Reportedly, more than 60 per cent of the city is damaged and shelter limited, causing inflated rents.

14. The Ministry of Defence publicly reported that government forces and their allies had conducted military operations in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib and Rif Dimashq Governorates in February.

15. The combined joint task force known as Operation Inherent Resolve (United States-led coalition) issued a statement on 8 February in which it declared:

> Syrian pro-regime forces initiated an unprovoked attack against well-established Syrian Democratic Forces headquarters on 7 February. Coalition service members in an advise, assist, and accompany capacity were co-located with SDF partners during the attack eight kilometres east of the agreed-upon Euphrates River de-confliction line. In defense of Coalition and partner forces, the Coalition conducted strikes against attacking forces to repel the act of aggression against partners engaged in the Global Coalition's defeat-Daesh mission. The Coalition remains committed to focusing on the defeat-Daesh mission in the Middle Euphrates River Valley and asserts its non-negotiable right to act in self-defence.

16. The Department of Defense of the United States also publicly reported that, in February, the coalition had carried out 135 strikes against ISIL targets in Dayr al-Zawr and Hasakah Governorates, 129 of which near Albu Kamal, Dayr al-Zawr.

Protection

17. Air and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians and to damage and destroy civilian infrastructure. Explosive weapons continued to be fired into populated areas, indiscriminately killing and injuring civilians, destroying and damaging vital infrastructure and leaving communities littered with hazards that killed and injured civilians and impeded humanitarian access. The use of improvised explosive devices in some areas added to the complexity of the explosive hazard threat. The many civilian casualties and the scale of civilian destruction remain a strong indication that violations of the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and of the resulting prohibition on the launching of

indiscriminate attacks, are continuing. Children are particularly affected. The year 2017 was the deadliest for children in the country since the beginning of the conflict.

18. Fighting continued to have an impact on civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools, markets and places of worship. On the basis of information received by OHCHR, civilian casualties occurred in various governorates, in possible violation of international humanitarian law. OHCHR has documented alleged incidents perpetrated by parties to the conflict, including government forces and their allies, non-State armed opposition groups and their allies and Security Council-designated terrorist groups.

19. In addition to violations documented by OHCHR, the Government provided OHCHR with information on alleged violations. The United Nations cannot verify these allegations independently. In notes verbales received on 14 and 15 February, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic in Geneva claimed that "85 rockets [were] fired by terrorist groups on Damascus between 22 January and 12 February 2018" and that "the total number of civilian deaths was 44 and 158 civilians injured, most of them women and children". In addition, in a note verbale received on 27 February, the Permanent Mission provided a list of "shelling with mortars and missiles, and sniper attacks targeting residential areas in Damascus city, that contains numbers, locations, casualties and injuries of civilians including children in the Syrian Arab Republic which resulted from the terrorist attacks carried out by terrorist armed groups in the period from 21 to 24 February". It stated that "the total number of civilian casualties was 5 deaths and 123 civilians injured, most of them women and children".

20. Notwithstanding the call upon the Syrian authorities by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions S-18/1 and 19/22 to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights, OHCHR reporting remains limited, given that the Government has not granted it access to the country.

21. The United Nations and its health partners verified 41 attacks that affected health-care facilities and personnel in February, of which 29 were in the eastern Ghutah area of Rif Dimashq and 10 were in Idlib, with 1 each in Damascus and Hama Governorates. Collectively, the attacks resulted in at least 19 people killed and 28 injured, including four health workers killed and seven injured. The attacks comprised 22 incidents involving hospitals in Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Hama and Damascus, 15 involving health centres in Rif Dimashq and Idlib, 2 involving ambulance systems in Rif Dimashq, where seven ambulances were damaged, 1 involving a medical warehouse in Rif Dimashq and 1 involving a blood bank in Idlib.

22. Educational facilities also continued to suffer the impact of the fighting, with the United Nations verifying three attacks affecting schools and children. On 2 February, nine children were severely injured by unexploded ordnance at a school in the village of Judaydah al-Fadl, Rif Dimashq. On 6 February, air strikes on the Shamali neighbourhood in the village of Tarmala, south-west Idlib, hit a secondary school, causing partial damage. On 8 February, a school in Irbin, Rif Dimashq, was seriously damaged by air strikes. On 21 February, two 14-year-old boys studying at an United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school were reportedly killed as they walked home after school as a mortar shell struck near the Jaramana refugee camp, Rif Dimashq. Two other children were reportedly injured.

Humanitarian access

Box 2
Key points

1. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need, including from within the Syrian Arab Republic. Regular programming reached more than 2 million people with food assistance through 1,744 deliveries.

2. One United Nations inter-agency convoy reached a besieged location, Nashabiyah, eastern Ghutah, on 14 February, providing assistance to 7,200 people. The total number of people reached under the plan for January-February was 7,200, or 0.8 per cent of the 844,720 people to whom access had originally been requested.

3. Cross-border assistance remains a vital part of the humanitarian response. In February, 499 trucks (17 consignments) delivered life-saving assistance to more than 1 million people in need in northern and southern areas of the country, through cross-border deliveries.

23. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need remained extremely challenging in many areas as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines, administrative impediments and deliberate restrictions imposed on the movement of people and goods by the parties to the conflict. In particular, access by the United Nations and its partners to people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remained a critical concern. Bureaucratic impediments, such as the non-issuance of facilitation letters by the Government, remained a significant factor in delays or non-deliveries, the creation of a tripartite coordination mechanism to tackle such problems notwithstanding. The most recent meeting of the mechanism was held in 12 December 2017, at which time there was no breakthrough on access-related issues.

24. The United Nations estimates that, as at February 2018, 413,920 people were living in eight areas under siege, compared with 417,566 in December 2017. The Bayt Jinn enclave, with a population of 3,646, in Rif Dimashq Governorate, has been removed from the list of besieged locations, given that a local agreement was reached in late December. The enclave remains on the list of hard-to-reach areas as humanitarian access and the freedom of movement of civilians remain constrained. An area is considered by the United Nations to be besieged when it is surrounded by armed actors, with the sustained effect that civilians, the sick and the wounded cannot regularly leave and humanitarian assistance cannot regularly enter. Of the eight besieged locations, five (accounting for 95 per cent of the total besieged population) are besieged by government forces, one (3 per cent of the total besieged population) is besieged by both government forces and non-State armed opposition groups and two (2 per cent of the total besieged population) are besieged by non-State armed opposition groups. In addition, it is estimated that some 1.9 million people are living in hard-to-reach locations. That figure represents a decrease compared with the previous estimate of 2.49 million, mainly as a result of access improvements in Rif Dimashq Governorate, in particular around Tall, in north-eastern parts of the country, notably rural areas around Raqqah, and in some subdistricts in Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr.

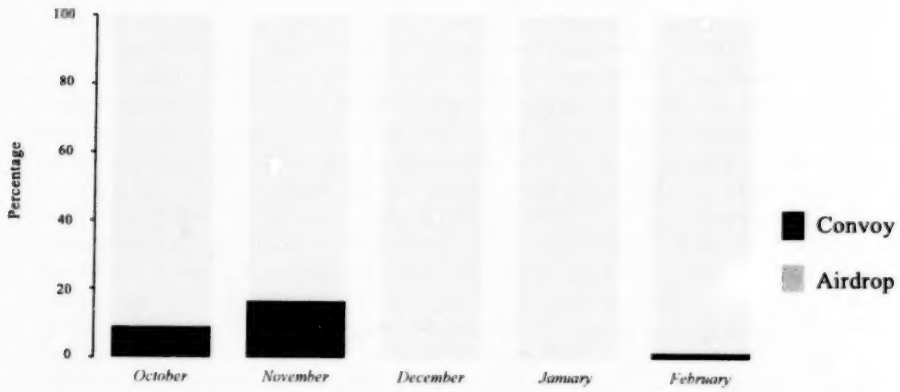
25. Under the United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for January and February, access was requested to 26 locations in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, with the objective of reaching 844,720 people. Convoys are prepared for areas with multisectoral needs where access is limited, to ensure that United Nations support is based on needs. Only one convoy was able to deploy, to Nashabiyah, eastern Ghutah, with assistance for 7,200 people (see table 1). The total number of people reached under the plan for January-February was 7,200, or 0.8 per cent of the total number of people to whom access had originally been requested. This number does not include convoys carrying supplies delivered by other humanitarian actors.

Table 1
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian convoys, February 2018

Date	*Location*	*Requested target (number of beneficiaries)*	*Number of beneficiaries reached*	*Type of assistance*
14 February	Nashabiyah	16 500	7 200	Multisectoral

26. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency deliveries. Such deliveries are undertaken in areas in which access is less challenging through an agency's regular programming. In February, the World Food Programme (WFP) submitted 1,744 official requests to the Syrian authorities to obtain facilitation letters for the transport of food assistance to locations throughout the country, all of which were approved. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 28 requests for facilitation letters for the movement of core relief items and livelihood kits, of which 22 were approved and 6 rejected for security reasons.

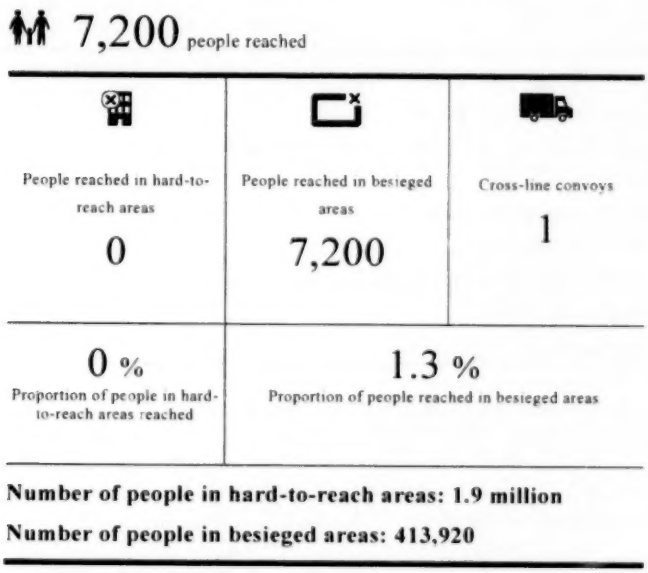
Figure II
Percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas through United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations



27. United Nations partners continued to face response challenges in north-eastern parts of the country, owing to, among other things, administrative restrictions, pending security approvals for access to restricted areas and high levels of explosive hazard contamination. Following the suspension of non-governmental organization

activities in January 2018 owing to restrictions by the national and local authorities, which affected 25 national non-governmental organizations, an agreement was reached on 31 January to allow for the resumption of United Nations regular programming in the north-east and for some humanitarian partners to resume their work. The agreement is, however, valid only for two months and covers a limited number of partners. It is critical that all humanitarian partners be permitted to continue to provide much-needed assistance to affected people in sites for internally displaced persons and host communities without restrictions, including to deter push factors compelling the displaced to return in the absence of safe and sustainable conditions. The United Nations continued to engage with the local administration and the Governor of Hasakah to identify a long-term solution to national non-governmental organization registration issues and enable the full, unhindered resumption of humanitarian activities in the north-east.

Figure III
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations, February 2018



28. Life-saving and life-sustaining medical items sufficient for 3,810 treatments were rejected or removed from inter-agency convoys by the Syrian authorities, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Details regarding the treatments and supplies removed are shown in table 2. Additional medical supplies were scheduled to be delivered as part of the inter-agency convoy plan; however, only one inter-agency convoy was able to proceed in February.

Table 2
Medical supplies removed from humanitarian convoys, February 2018

Location	*Number of treatments*	*Types of supplies*
Nashabiyah	3 810	Syringes, IV catheter, sterile surgical gloves, anesthetics, adrenaline, anti-asthma medicines

Humanitarian response

29. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners reached millions of people in need through all available access modalities, including regular programming from within the Syrian Arab Republic, whereby humanitarian deliveries reach those in need without crossing conflict lines; cross-line convoys, whereby assistance from within the country is delivered across conflict lines; and cross-border deliveries, whereby assistance is provided to those in need from Jordan and Turkey (see tables 3 and 4). In addition to the United Nations and its partners, non-governmental organizations continued to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need. Local authorities in many areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups also continued to provide services where possible.

Table 3
People reached by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities, February 2018

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	60 000
International Organization for Migration	32 760
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	2 747 460
United Nations Children's Fund	1 500 000
United Nations Development Programme	256 534
United Nations Population Fund	57 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	247 480
World Food Programme	2 703 725
World Health Organization	1 321 068

30. Cross-border deliveries continued from Turkey and Jordan under the terms of resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016) and 2393 (2017) (see figure IV). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including of its content, destination and number of beneficiaries expected to be reached.

31. Since cross-border operations began in July 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations has conducted more than 752 cross-border consignments, with more than 19,124 trucks (13,037 by way of Bab al-Hawa and 1,941 by way of Bab al-Salam from Turkey and 4,146 by way of Ramtha from Jordan). These operations complement the aid provided by international and Syrian non-governmental organizations that provide services to millions more from neighbouring countries.

32. The United Nations and its implementing partners delivered food assistance to more than 650,000 people through cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan (see table 4). Moreover, the United Nations conducted health and medical deliveries, providing more than 77,000 treatments through the cross-border mechanism. In the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) delivered winter kits, child protection assistance, nutrition, education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies in four shipments. Winter clothes and blankets benefited 5,000 and 25,000 children, respectively. Child protection

supplies, including recreation kits, benefited 40,500 children. Nutrition supplies, including high-energy biscuits and micronutrients, served 39,725 women and children. Education supplies, including school bags and school-in-a-box supplies, served 50,500 children. Health supplies, including essential medicines and equipment, benefited 35,000 people, while water, sanitation and hygiene supplies, including family hygiene kits and water purification tablets, served 32,500 people. In the Governorates of Dar'a and Qunaytirah, water and sanitation and nutrition supplies were delivered in two trans-shipments. Water disinfectants served 475,000 beneficiaries, while nutrition supplies, including micronutrients and high-energy biscuits, benefited more than 27,000 people.

33. Moreover, as part of the second phase of the polio outbreak response, WHO and UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Health, conducted an inactivated polio vaccine immunization round that successfully concluded in Damascus and Hasakah Governorates, parts of Aleppo Governorate and the Jaramana district of Rif Dimashq Governorate. A total of 233,518 children between 2 and 23 months of age received the vaccine, representing 71 per cent of the estimated target of 330,000 children.

34. The first round of cash assistance in 2018 was launched by UNRWA on 14 January, targeting up to 418,000 Palestine refugees in need. In February, 186,167 beneficiaries (52,405 families) received cash assistance covering two months, for a total of $64 million. In addition, UNRWA launched its first round of food assistance for special hardship cases in January. In February, 4,378 people (1,440 families) received 2,808 food parcels.

35. In the framework of its winterization programme, as at 26 February, UNHCR had distributed more than 1.7 million winterized core relief items, including high thermal blankets, extra plastic sheeting and winter clothes kits, to more than 1 million people in Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah, Hasakah, Qunaytirah, Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Suwayda', Ladhiqiyah, Tartus, Dar'a, Damascus and Rif Dimashq Governorates. UNHCR and its partners also continued to enhance the response to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and other crisis-affected populations. To that end, 4,088 protection interventions were conducted, reaching 65,871 beneficiaries, comprising 54,261 people through general protection activities, 1,527 through child protection activities and 10,083 through more than 400 awareness-raising campaigns on prevention and response activities in relation to sexual and gender-based violence throughout 12 governorates. The United Nations Population Fund reached 294,723 people with reproductive health and sexual and gender-based violence response activities.

36. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations, monitoring 499 trucks in 17 consignments by six United Nations entities, confirming the humanitarian nature of each and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The United Nations provides 48-hour notice to the Government for all shipments. Once in the country, United Nations partners ensure that shipments arrive at the designated warehouses. Independent third-party companies contracted by the United Nations ensure independent verification of the assistance arriving at the warehouses and also monitor the distribution and/or service provision. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Jordan and Turkey.

Figure IV
Number of beneficiaries targeted by the United Nations and its partners by cluster through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, February 2018

(Thousands)

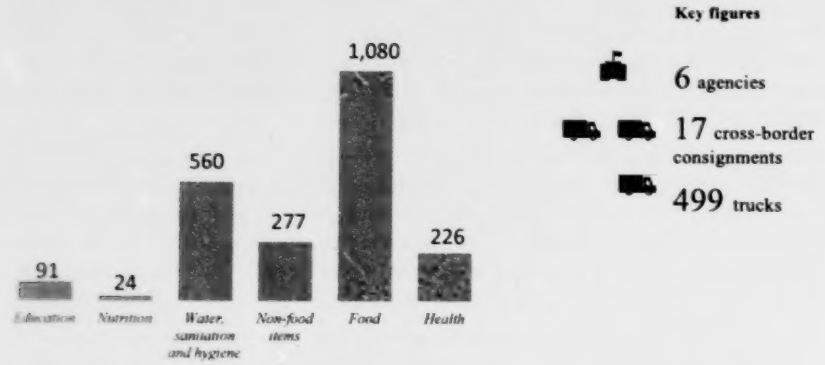


Table 4
Number of beneficiaries targeted through cross-border deliveries by sector and by district, February 2018

Governorate	District	Education	Food	Health	Non-food items	Nutrition	Water, sanitation and hygiene
Aleppo	Bab	–	–	2 500	–	–	2 500
Aleppo	I'zaz	64 170	138 875	–	–	–	39 960
Aleppo	Jarabulus	1 105	–	14 973	–	–	5 000
Aleppo	Jabal Sim'an	17 000	87 850	–	18 000	–	12 000
Dar'a	Sanamayn	–	18 075	38 000	–	2 082	–
Dar'a	Dar'a	–	145 522	243 387	–	10 757	–
Dar'a	Izra'	–	60139	115 470	–	–	–
Hama	Suqaylibiyah	14 500	–	–	–	–	–
Hama	Muhradah	6 500	–	–	–		–
Idlib	Ma'arah	18 300	25 000	–	–	–	9,072
Idlib	Ariha	11 800	56 250	–	–	–	–
Idlib	Harim	33 500	407 140	10 000	19 990	6 275	31 439
Idlib	Idlib	24 500	106 850	–	53 026	–	474
Idlib	Jisr al-Shugur	35 000	–	62 000	–	3 450	80 000
Qunaytirah	Fiq	–	2 250	6 000	–	1 664	10 200
Qunaytirah	Qunaytirah	–	29 884	67 400	–	–	86 465
Suwayda'	Suwayda'	–	1 685	–	–	–	–

37. The Russian Federation sent information bulletins to the United Nations from the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Visas and registrations

38. A total of 80 new United Nations visa requests were submitted to the Government in February. Of those, 50 were approved, 28 remain pending and 2 were rejected. Of the 80 new visa applications submitted in December 2017 and January 2018, 56 were approved by February, while 24 remain pending. A total of 55 United Nations visa renewal requests were submitted in February, of which 35 were approved and 20 remain pending. An additional 30 requests for visa renewals submitted in January were approved in February. For some United Nations entities in the Syrian Arab Republic, a significant number of staff are not in place or cannot be replaced owing to the non-issuance of visas for months, formal requests notwithstanding.

39. A total of 23 international non-governmental organizations are registered with the Government to operate in the country.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

40. Programmes of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system are implemented in areas affected by frequent clashes among belligerents, air strikes, regular exchange of indirect artillery fire and asymmetric attacks. In addition, and as result of activities relating to the armed conflict, some areas of operation are highly contaminated with explosive hazards that pose an elevated risk to the implementation of United Nations activities in those areas. On 12 February, a mortar shell landed on the UNRWA Zahirah distribution centre in Damascus. Minor damage was reported.

41. Since the beginning of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 22 staff members of the United Nations or agencies of the United Nations system, of whom 18 were UNRWA staff members, 66 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Many staff members of international and national non-governmental organizations are also reported to have been killed.

42. A total of 27 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (1 staff member of the United Nations Development Programme and 26 UNRWA staff members) are detained or missing.

III. Observations

43. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2401 (2018). It is true that in some areas the conflict has diminished in intensity, yet there has been no cessation of hostilities. In eastern Ghutah in particular, air strikes, shelling and ground offensives have intensified since the adoption of the resolution and claimed many hundreds of civilian lives.

44. Military escalation and the resulting increased civilian death and destruction across the Syrian Arab Republic after months of diplomatic engagement by Member States and parties to the conflict is an alarming development. It is civilians who are suffering the devastating and long-lasting consequences. I remind all parties of their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian and human rights law. They must respect civilians and civilian infrastructure at all times and take constant care to spare them from harm. They must also evacuate, care for and protect the wounded and sick and respect and protect medical personnel and facilities. Efforts

to combat terrorist groups designated by the Security Council do not supplant these obligations.

45. Accountability for serious violations is a requirement under international law and central to achieving sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate my call for the situation in the country to be referred to the International Criminal Court. I also call upon all parties to the conflict, Member States, civil society and the United Nations system as a whole to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

46. The United Nations and its implementing partners remain focused on reaching those most in need, including the 5.6 million people considered to be in acute need. The impartial and needs-based approach means that the United Nations will continue to seek to deliver aid and to provide services to millions of people in a principled manner, regardless of their location.

47. My Special Envoy is working steadfastly towards the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) and the pursuit of a political solution to this horrific conflict, which enters its grim eighth year in March. I ask all Member States to continue to support his efforts, notably through continuing engagement with the negotiating parties to encourage their constructive commitment to the United Nations-led intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, and to support the establishment of a constitutional committee. I continue to offer my fullest support to my Special Envoy in this pursuit.

48. Our common objective should be to alleviate and end the suffering of the Syrian people. What the Syrian people need immediately has been made abundantly clear and affirmed in resolution 2401 (2018). Civilians need a cessation of hostilities, protection, access to basic goods and services and an end to sieges. Political efforts to bring the war to an end must be accorded priority and redoubled by all parties to the conflict. If those aspects are addressed together, it is possible to alleviate and truly end the suffering of the Syrian people and bring about sustainable peace in their country.

Annex

Incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, February 2018*

Damascus and Rif Dimashq Governorates

- On 2 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas in opposition-held Hamuriyah, reportedly injuring a boy. On the same day, two strikes hit residential areas, killing 3 civilians and injuring at least 20, including five children.
- On 4 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in opposition-controlled Duma, reportedly killing 6 civilians, including two women and two boys, and injuring at least 30 others, one of them a woman who died the following day.
- On 5 February, an air strike hit a residential area in opposition-held Hazzah, reportedly killing six civilians, including two girls and an ambulance driver.
- On 5 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas in opposition-controlled Irbin, allegedly killing five civilians, including a woman and two girls.
- On 5 February, air strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Bayt Siwa, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including two women and two boys.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Hamuriyah, allegedly killing 4 civilians, including a woman and a child, and injuring at least 20 others.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area in opposition-controlled Saqba, damaging several residential buildings, and allegedly killing 3 civilians and injuring at least 15 others, including women and children.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit residential areas of opposition-held Kafr Batna, reportedly killing 6 civilians, one of them a child, and injuring at least 50 others. An air strike also hit a building hosting a kindergarten, which was partly destroyed.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit Kafr Batna, reportedly damaging the mental health care department of a medical point and hitting a medical clinic, with no reports of casualties.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Irbin, reportedly killing 12 civilians, including a male nurse, three women and four boys, and injuring at least 50 others. Among the 12 casualties was a family of six, allegedly killed as the building in which they were living collapsed while they were inside.

* In line with Security Council resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of developments on the ground and the incidents that occurred during the month that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been able to corroborate relates to compliance with Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Cessation of Hostilities of the International Syria Support Group. The reporting is not a comprehensive listing of all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law that took place in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period.

- On 6 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held Zamalka, reportedly killing four civilians, including a woman and a girl.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a medical facility in a residential area of opposition-controlled Harasta, reportedly killing the son of an aid worker in the facility and injuring seven other civilians, including an aid worker.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Duma, allegedly killing at least 31 civilians, including 12 women and four boys, and injuring more than 100 others, including 37 children and 27 women. Ground-based strikes then reportedly also hit those locations, injuring at least two volunteers from local rescue teams as they were providing support to civilians.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area in the vicinity of opposition-held Mudayra, allegedly killing 3 civilians, including two women, and injuring at least 25 others. A school in the area, which was unoccupied at the time, was damaged.
- On 6 February, air strikes hit a residential area of Misraba, reportedly killing 5 civilians, including two women and two boys, and injuring at least 40 others.
- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit the government-held area of Homsi in Jaramana, reportedly killing two boys and injuring four civilians, including a woman.
- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit the vicinity of a bus station in the government-controlled Bab Tuma area in the old city of Damascus, allegedly killing two civilians and injuring seven others, including an adolescent.
- On 7 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Hamuriyah, allegedly killing at least 9 civilians, including four boys, two girls and two women, and injuring at least 25 others, including women and children.
- On 7 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Bayt Siwa, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including a man, his two sons, another boy and two girls, and injuring at least 15 others, including three women and three children.
- On 7 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Duma, allegedly killing at least 19 civilians, including five women and three boys, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On 8 February, ground-based strikes hit Faysal Street in the government-held Amarah residential area of Damascus, reportedly killing a civilian.
- On 8 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the government-held Assad suburb, Rif Dimashq, reportedly killing two civilians and injuring seven others, including three women.
- On 8 February, an air strike hit a residential area in Hamuriyah, reportedly killing 6 civilians, one of them a boy, and injuring at least 17 others.
- On 8 February, a series of air strikes hit residential areas of Irbin, resulting in the collapse of several residential buildings where civilians were seeking refuge in the basements. The strikes reportedly killed 26 civilians, including two women, eight boys, two girls and an aid worker, and injured at least 115 others. Numerous ground-based strikes on residential areas were also reported.

- On 8 February, air strikes followed by ground-based strikes hit residential areas in opposition-held Jisrayn, reportedly killing 16 civilians, including five women, two boys and a girl, and injuring at least 25 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Duma, reportedly killing 5 civilians, including a woman and a girl, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Saqba, reportedly killing 3 civilians, including a woman and two boys, and injuring at least 12 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Harasta, reportedly in the vicinity of an education charity, killing a teacher and an adult student as they were leaving the premises.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Irbin, reportedly killing seven civilians and injuring at least seven others, including a woman and several children.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Duma, allegedly killing 5 civilians, including two girls, and injuring at least 50 others.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit a residential area of Harasta, reportedly killing six civilians, including a boy and a girl, and injuring at least six others.
- On 9 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area of government-held Warwar in north Damascus. One hit a residential building, which allegedly caused a fire that killed two civilians and injured four others.
- On 19 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit a farm located in a semi-rural area of opposition-held Utaya, reportedly killing six civilians, including a mother and her children (a boy and three girls).
- On 19 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Jisrayn, reportedly killing four civilians.
- On 19 February, air strikes reportedly hit residential areas of Hamuriyah, reportedly killing at least 20 civilians, including two women, two boys and a girl, and injuring at least 35 others. Ground-based strikes allegedly hit the area both before and after the incidents.
- On 19 February, air strikes hit residential areas of Saqba, allegedly killing 13 civilians, including two women and a girl, and injuring at least 45 others.
- On 19 February, two air strikes hit residential areas of Kafr Batna, reportedly killing two civilians, one of whom was a woman, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On 19 February, air strikes and ground-based strikes hit residential areas in Misraba, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including a woman, a boy and two girls.
- On 19 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Duma, allegedly killing at least two girls and a boy and injuring at least 20 other civilians.
- On 19 February, several air strikes hit a residential area in Hazzah, reportedly killing 7 civilians, including five women and a child, and injuring at least 30 others.
- On the evening of 19 February, several medical facilities located in residential areas were reportedly hit and either partly damaged or put out of service by air strikes, including the Hayat hospital located in a residential area in Hazzah, the

obstetrics hospital in Saqba, a medical point in Saqba and a hospital located in a semi-rural area in Marj, where a doctor was reportedly killed and at least one patient injured.

- On 20 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Bayt Siwa, reportedly killing 22 civilians, including eight women, seven children and a first responder.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Hamuriyah, allegedly killing 5 civilians, including a woman, an aid worker and a media worker, and injuring at least 15 others.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit a residential area in Irbin, reportedly killing seven civilians, including two boys and two girls.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit residential areas in Saqba, reportedly killing 10 civilians, including a woman, three girls and a medical worker, and injuring at least 25 others.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit the vicinity of the Presidential Square in government-controlled Jaramana, reportedly killing 2 civilians, one of whom was a woman, and injuring at least 12 others.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit near Abbasiyin Square in government-controlled Damascus, reportedly killing a female civilian.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit in the vicinity of a school located in government-held Sha'alan, Damascus, reportedly killing three children.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit the government-held area of the National Museum and reportedly killed two civilians, including a taxi driver, and injured five others.
- On 25 February, air strikes hit a hospital with surgical women's and paediatric departments in Saqba, reportedly putting it out of service and destroying some of the remaining stocks of medication.
- From the morning of 25 February, air strikes and heavy shelling hit the opposition-held town of Shaffuniyah. OHCHR received reports that toxic agents might have been released following the strikes and that several civilians, including six children, were experiencing respiratory difficulties. One of them reportedly died on the same day, and a second on 1 March.
- On 26 February, air strikes hit a residential area of Duma. One reportedly hit a residential building, which then collapsed, allegedly killing 13 civilians, including four women, six girls and a boy, who had sought shelter in the basement.
- On 26 February, air strikes reportedly hit the building of the opposition-run local council of Shaffuniyah, reportedly killing six civilians in the basement, including the council's head and two other council members. Sources on the ground allege that incendiary weapons were used

Aleppo Governorate

- On 1 February, air strikes hit a residential area of the opposition-controlled village of A'bad, in southern Aleppo, reportedly killing six civilians, including a woman and three children.

- On 2 February, air strikes around a camp for internally displaced persons on the outskirts of the village of Tall Hadiyah, in the vicinity of opposition-controlled territory in southern Aleppo, allegedly killed seven civilians, including two women and a child.

- On 19 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the village of Basutah in Shirawah district, just south of Afrin, allegedly killing a 13-year-old girl and injuring at least seven other children between 7 and 14 years of age from the same family.

- On 21 February, a ground-based strike hit a street in the centre of Afrin, reportedly damaging civilian infrastructure, including the building that housed the Malak Association, which provides services for children with disabilities and orphans. Two boys inside the building were slightly injured by shattered glass. The Association reportedly hosted 12 children and seven staffers, all of whom were relocated to another building in the city.

- On 27 February, ground-based strikes hit near a moving vehicle in the village of Yalanquz, Jindayris district, allegedly killing a civilian accompanying his mother to their home in the village. The pair had earlier fled towards Afrin as a result of the fighting.

Idlib Governorate

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a residential area of opposition-controlled Kafr Nubl in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district, reportedly killing 9 civilians, including two women and three boys (several from the same family), and injuring at least 20 others.

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a large hospital in opposition-controlled Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, allegedly causing substantial damage. The incident also reportedly injured at least five newborns and several other patients, including some wounded in an earlier incident, who displayed symptoms of suffocation. Patients had to be evacuated to nearby houses or to the hospital in Kafr Nubl.

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a residential area in opposition-held eastern Saraqib, reportedly injuring 11 civilian men, including three first responders. OHCHR spoke to a medical source who had treated the injured and who reported that the victims all presented symptoms such as suffocation, burning eyes and agitation, which he noted was consistent with exposure to toxic agents.

- On 4 February, air strikes hit a building in a residential area of opposition-controlled Wadi al-Nasim, in the south-east of the city of Idlib, allegedly killing 12 civilians, including four women and four girls (one of whom a 1-month-old infant), and injuring at least 21 others, including five women and four children.

- On 5 February, air strikes hit a surgical hospital in Kafr Nubl, reportedly resulting in extensive damage, including to the emergency room and patients' rooms, and the destruction of an ambulance parked outside the building. The patients, some of whom were brought from another hospital struck the day before, had to be evacuated.

- On 5 February, air strikes hit a primary health centre in the opposition-held village of Mardikh, Saraqib subdistrict, allegedly causing substantial damage and putting it out of service. On the same day, air strikes hit a blood bank in Saraqib, allegedly causing further material damage. The facility was previously hit and rendered inoperable on 18 January.

- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit the Bayan camp for internally displaced persons in the opposition-controlled town of Atimah, near the border with Turkey and in the vicinity of Afrin, reportedly killing an 8-year-old girl from Raqqah and injuring seven civilians, including two girls, a boy and two women.
- On 7 February, air strikes hit a residential area in the Western neighbourhood of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, reportedly killing 12 civilians, including a woman, and injuring at least 10 others.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a primary health centre in the opposition-held village of Mishmishan and a nearby high school in eastern Jisr al-Shugur, allegedly killing eight civilians, including two women and four children, and injuring at least 15 others, including three first responders. The strikes reportedly damaged the school and put the medical facility out of service.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a residential area of the opposition-controlled village of Kafr Sajnah in Khan Shaykhun, reportedly killing a woman and her child and injuring at least eight other civilians, six of them children.
- On 8 February, air strikes hit a first responder facility in Khan Shaykhun, reportedly killing three male first responders and injuring four others. The facility was damaged. In addition, a nearby hospital, understood to be out of service following a previous strike, was further damaged, with a male civilian working as a guard allegedly killed.
- On 9 February, air strikes hit residential areas of the opposition-controlled town of Has in Kafr Nubl, reportedly killing 15 civilians, including eight women and three children, two boys and a girl, and injuring at least 22 others.

Homs and Hama Governorates

- On 1 February, air strikes hit residential areas in opposition-controlled Kafr Nabudah, reportedly killing 5 civilians, including two women, and injuring at least 10 others.
- On 6 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas in the opposition-controlled village of Sam'alil, Hulah district, reportedly killing two civilian men.
- On 9 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Lataminah, reportedly injuring two civilian women.
- On 16 February, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of opposition-controlled Ghantu in Hulah, reportedly injuring at least five civilians, including a woman and two children.
- On 18 February, air strikes hit residential areas of the opposition-controlled village of Latmin in Lataminah, reportedly killing a married couple and injuring at least three other civilians.
- On 20 February, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the opposition-controlled village of Zakah in Lataminah, reportedly killing a 6-year-old boy.

Dayr al-Zawr Governorate

- On 3 February, air strikes hit a school in the town of Bahrah (held by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)), in the eastern part of the governorate,

reportedly killing at least 40 civilians, including 12 women and 19 children, the majority of them persons displaced from Safirah in eastern Aleppo Governorate.

- On 10 February, two children were allegedly killed when explosive hazards detonated in the ISIL-controlled Jubaylah neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city.
- On 17 February, a girl and boy were reportedly killed when explosive hazards detonated in the ISIL-controlled Hawi neighbourhood of Abu Hamam, in the eastern part of the governorate.
- On 20 February, air strikes hit residential areas of the ISIL-controlled town of Hajin, in the eastern part of the governorate, allegedly killing at least 16 civilians, including six women and five children from two families.
- On 23 February, three children were reportedly killed in Bahrah, in the eastern part of the governorate, when explosive hazards detonated in their house.
- On 25 February, air strikes hit a gathering of internally displaced persons in Zahrat Alluni, between the towns of Susah and Sha'fah, in the south-eastern part of the governorate, allegedly killing at least 11 civilians. The majority of those killed were persons displaced from Baghuz, in the eastern part of the governorate.

Raqqah and Hasakah Governorates

- On 15 February, a civilian was reportedly killed in the city of Raqqah when explosive hazards detonated inside his house.
- On 15 February, Kurdish forces raided the Nashwah neighbourhood in the city of Hasakah and reportedly took three civilian men from their homes for military recruitment purposes.
- On 16 February, two children were allegedly killed as a result of explosive hazards that detonated in the street in the Nawawi Mosque neighbourhood of Raqqah.
- On the night of 18 February, at least nine civilian men were allegedly taken from their homes by Kurdish forces in the Ghuwayran neighbourhood of Hasakah. Their whereabouts remain unknown.